



"Baarak - Allahu laka"

May Allah Bless You

In the Light of
Quran & Sunnah

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

This phrase, "*Baarak-Allahu laka*" (May Allah bless you) which we use to congratulate others and express our desire to share in their joy is spontaneously said by us at every joyous occasion. As a result, the use of this phrase has become so common that it has become a mere utterance and its true meaning is lost upon us. We only know the occasions for its use, but either do not know what it signifies or the underlying reason for using it has been pushed to the back of our minds.

"*Baarak-Allahu laka*" is actually a supplication that may Allah bestow '*barakah*' upon you in the blessing that you have received from Him which is the cause of your joy.

So come let us see what '*barakah*' really means:

The material means of comfort and joy in this world which we are so busy in striving for are simply the means to the end, but not the end itself. Money, land, houses, servants, cars, planes, spouses, children are merely the means of comfort, contentment, happiness and peace of mind, but it does not mean that the person who possesses all or some of these will necessarily enjoy their benefits. There are so many people who have an enormous amount of wealth, live in palatial houses and possess expensive cars, but despite all these means of comfort, a look into their private lives reveals that they have no peace or happiness in their lives. On the contrary, they are going through some form of agony or the other which has made these symbols of wealth meaningless for them. A person's dining table may be laid out with a variety of sumptuous foods and a vast choice of fresh and exotic fruit, but if his digestion is defective, then all these combined, cannot bring him any pleasure and are of no use to him. Even if his digestion is working, but he is under great stress or undergoing extreme anxiety which deprives him of his appetite, all these delicious foods will remain uneaten and he will be unable to enjoy this blessing.

A person may own a palatial house; his air-conditioned bedroom may be luxuriously furnished with the most exquisitely crafted furniture, beautiful and expensive decoration pieces and fitted with the most modern conveniences; but when he enters this environment which most people can only dream about, and lies on his bed he cannot sleep. Despite trying hard to go to sleep, he tosses and turns all night in bed. This person has all the apparent comforts that wealth can buy, but they are of no avail to him if they cannot ensure that he can get a good night's rest.

In contrast to this, there is a hard-working farmer or labourer who after four or five hours of hard labour, opens his lunch box which contains just simple fare; but his appetite is healthy and his digestion

is sound. In this state of hunger, his simple fare definitely gives him more satisfaction and delight than is afforded to the rich man who has a table laid out with an array of fresh and expensive food but who cannot enjoy them. Then, when the labourer gets home at night so exhausted that he can hardly keep his eyes open and lies down on his bed of rough matting, as soon as his head touches the pillow, he is fast asleep. He wakes up in the morning totally refreshed after a good night's sleep and is ready to face another long day ahead of him. Although he had no grand bed, no soft bedding, no air-conditioned room, his bedding of rough matting did not deter him from having a sound sleep which his wealthy counterpart could not get despite his luxurious air-conditioned bedroom.

These types of examples abound and we come across so many people in our daily lives that have all the means of comfort and are yet are deprived of the accompanying satisfaction that is associated with these belongings. On the other hand we see many others who despite having only modest means are far more contented and happier.

This makes it very obvious that deriving the true benefit of the means of comfort is based on certain factors which are beyond a person's control. He may spend a lot of money to buy the means of comfort, but the factors which create or control his ability to enjoy them cannot be bought. A person may work day and night to accumulate wealth; he can construct palatial mansions, build huge factories, drive expensive cars, but the things that are required for deriving real comfort and pleasure from these things—sound health, a peaceful home environment, pleasant interpersonal relationships, the required frame of mind—these cannot be produced or acquired through wealth alone. These factors are totally not in our control; they are in fact a bestowal from Allah and there is no one else who can give them to us. If Allah so wants, even a hut can become a person's Paradise and if He wants, He can deprive the grandest palace of His blessings and make it a bed of smouldering coals for its residents.

This is what we call "*barakah*"—the abundance, plenitude and blessings in something which make it a source of comfort and joy for the possessor. It is a bestowal from Allah and Allah alone and something which is only within His power to give. This bestowal of barakah in anything means that abundance is created in it, so that even a little suffices for one's needs and one also gets the required benefit from it. If this barakah is missing, then even spending enormous amounts of wealth does not ensure that the person gets the benefit he requires.

There is another aspect of barakah which is related to the final outcome of the acquisition. Even if one is getting some benefit from it temporarily, for it to have barakah for the possessor, the ultimate outcome too should be good and have an element of continuity. For

example, if a person robs millions of rupees and enjoys himself for a few days, but finally ends up in prison, the few days of enjoyment would have been of no use and would become meaningless. So this also means that only that acquisition has value in which the final outcome is free of some problem or difficulty.

So barakah is actually a combination of these 2 things; one is the external aspect which means that what we receive should in reality be a source of comfort and that nothing should happen which mars the pleasure; and secondly that its outcome should be good and the results of the joy one derives from it should have continuity. So when we say "*Barak Allahu laka*" to someone on acquiring the means of some happiness, we mean that, "May Allah bestow barakah—abundance and blessings for you in this means of happiness and make it a source of real joy and pleasure for you, in addition to its outcome in this world and the next also being good for you. When we say it at someone's wedding we mean that although you may have made a real effort to get a good match, but the success of the marriage is dependent on some unknown factors which are not in your control, but only Allah has power over them. Hence, we pray to Allah that this match be blessed by Him and the union proves fruitful from the point of both this world and the next.

When someone buys a car, we say "*Baarak Allahu laka*" and in these words is an inherent recognition and acknowledgement of the fact that although this car is an obvious source of comfort, it is subject to circumstances beyond your control. Only time will show whether it will truly be a source of comfort or it will end up daily in the workshop and create nothing but problems for the owner. Since these circumstances are beyond our control and are within Allah's power to control, "We pray to Allah that He bestow His barakah—blessings and abundance upon you so that this car should not only become a source of true comfort for you, but its final outcome is good for you and that its benefits reach out to you in both this world and the next."

Through this explanation it should become amply clear that every time we utter this phrase of "*Baarak Allahu laka*" we are acknowledging on every such occasion of happiness that the real and most important aspect of the acquisition is not the acquisition itself, but the barakah that will be derived from it. Without it everything else becomes meaningless and of no real worth whereas having barakah means that you have true value-addition. Along with this, it also amounts to accepting that the provision of barakah is not within our power but that it is a bestowal from Allah alone.

Unfortunately as we use this phrase merely customarily and as part of an observance of tradition without giving it much thought, our mind is unable to grasp its true meaning and significance and thus

we miss out on realizing the importance of barakah in our practical lives. Another reason for this is also because it is intangible as we cannot count, weigh or measure barakah in material terms. As a result, all our efforts and striving is directed at acquiring the means of comfort and pleasures. We are not at all focused on giving attention to the creation of barakah that is required in them to enable them to become a source of real and lasting benefits and joy. If we were truly focused on barakah, realising fully well that it is a bestowal from Allah alone, then we would not go about trying to secure those means of comfort which are acquired through Allah's disobedience, be it through dishonesty, injustice, oppression or by trampling on the rights of others. As a result of not realising its importance we are busy day and night engrossed in increasing our wealth, status and possessions, leaving us no time to calculate how much their increase has really resulted in increasing our real joy and happiness from these things.

If a person tramples on other people's rights or falls into giving and taking bribery to achieve his ends merely to accumulate wealth, while he may be happy that he is increasing his wealth, he may find that in a few days such circumstances are created that he ends up using that money for say, hospital bills or legal fees for a court case etc. It is at such times that he may realise that all he got from his endeavors was a mere headache and that had he not deprived others of their rights, it is quite possible that his halaal (permissible income) income, albeit less, would have sufficed for him. Here he has been deprived of barakah due to his ill-gotten gains.

It does occur to us many times when we see so many unjust and dishonest people prospering and enjoying life that their dishonesty has had no effect on their enjoyment or pleasure. But unfortunately, once again we make the same mistake of thinking of the means as the end itself. When we see a dishonest person's grand house, beautiful car and luxuries of life we tend to assume that he is really enjoying himself or is really happy. This, despite the fact that we realise that contentment and happiness are internal states which we cannot assess by just looking at a person and till such time that we look into the depths of his heart, we can never truly know what he is feeling. It is worth noting here that in general, the suicide rate is higher in households which are known to be affluent despite the fact that they are not lacking in the so-called means of happiness. There are innumerable examples of people who appear so happy and yet, when they have opened up their hearts to someone, there was nothing but grief and sorrow to be found there.

Secondly, as has already been mentioned earlier, the meaning of barakah covers not just time related enjoyment but it is also necessary for the outcome of the happiness to be favourable. So even

if a dishonest person is happy for a period of time, it will not last and the outcome, i.e. the ultimate end will not be good for him. Very often, the punishment for dishonesty and adopting impermissible ways to acquire things is awarded in this very world and in such a manner that the happiness becomes as if it was non-existent. Sometimes the difficulties that befall him in his life are themselves a punishment of his deeds, but a person does not even realise which action he is being punished for. In any case, ultimately in the Hereafter, he will receive his dues for his dishonesty and injustice and there is no escape from it. Intoxicated by power and wealth, a person becomes heedless to his fate, but the day that death knocks on his door, all his euphoria will vanish. He will see his heaps of wealth for which he disregarded the principles of truth and justice for what they really are –nothing but smouldering coals that will burn him. The Quran explains this very reality like this:

"Those who unjustly eat up the property of orphans eat up a fire into their own bodies: they will soon be enduring a blazing fire!" (4:10)

Lastly, please understand clearly that the real reason for our lives lacking barakah is distancing ourselves from the Quran. Allah says:

"But whosoever turns away from My Message verily for him is a life narrowed down and We shall raise him up blind on the Day of Judgment." (20:124)

May Allah bestow upon us the desire, guidance and ability to learn and understand the Quran and act upon its teachings.

اَللّٰهُمَّ اَلِفْ بَيْنَ قُلُوْبِنَا وَاصْلِحْ ذَاتَ بَيْنِنَا وَاهْدِنَا سُبُلَ السَّلَامِ وَنَجِّنَا مِنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ اِلَى النُّوْرِ وَجَنِّبْنَا الْفَوَاحِشَ مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَمَا بَطَنَ وَبَارِكْ لَنَا فِيْ اَسْمَاعِنَا وَاَبْصَارِنَا وَقُلُوْبِنَا وَاَزْوَاجِنَا وَذُرِّيَّاتِنَا وَتُبْ عَلَيْنَا اِنَّكَ اَنْتَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيْمُ
(الحاكم، صحيح على شرط مسلم)

O Allah! Put affection amongst our hearts, set right our matters between ourselves, guide us to the ways of peace, save us from the darkness towards the light, save us from all kinds of indecency; the apparent as well as the hidden, and bless our hearing, our seeing, our hearts, our spouses, our children, and turn in mercy upon us. Indeed You are the One who greatly accepts repentance, One who is repeatedly Merciful." (Al-Hakim) Ameen!



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